



NEWS

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Contact: Hugh Vickery
202-501-4633

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Issues Temporary Contract to Operate Facilities at Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has awarded a six-month services contract to GeoEngineers, Inc., of Portland, Ore., to operate and maintain Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge's facilities and equipment. The short-term contract is designed to keep the atoll's infrastructure operational while the agency evaluates long-term options for operating this remote island refuge in the Pacific.

"We are pleased to have found such a qualified contractor for this interim period while we assess future operations on Midway Atoll," said Assistant Secretary of Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks Craig Manson. "Midway Phoenix Corporation unexpectedly announced in January that it was leaving the island. This temporary contract will serve us well as we regroup for the future."

Unlike the original cooperative agreement with Midway Phoenix Corporation, the contract is a fee-for-services arrangement. GeoEngineers will not operate any tourist facilities and will have no opportunity to earn a profit from fuel sales, hotel accommodations, or food services. The company will focus on providing municipal-type services such as operating the power and water distribution systems, plus very limited activities at the airfield.

"Although we are not in a position at this time to reopen our doors to visitors, we hope to be able to do so in the future," Manson said. "We are working with the U.S. Navy and will host an event on Midway to honor the 60th anniversary of the Battle of Midway in early June, but the terms of this short-term contract are fairly basic. The next six months will allow us to inventory and evaluate the infrastructure to clarify our future options."

Under the terms of the agreement, GeoEngineers will provide operational staff, inventory functional equipment and facilities, and determine operational costs of the island infrastructure. The airfield will be open for Fish and Wildlife Service charter flights and for emergency use by the military, U.S. Coast Guard, and private aircraft.

GeoEngineers is a 200-person company providing engineering and environmental science services from nine offices throughout the Pacific Northwest. Founded in 1980, the company has a long history of overcoming significant logistical obstacles on pipeline, petroleum, and forest

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products projects. Recent remote projects include environmental consulting services in Kazakhstan, geotechnical services on Bonney Island, Nigeria, and waterfront development work in Peru and Bangladesh. GeoEngineers recently completed a manual environmental cleanup on Laysan Island in the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge, and represented the Fish and Wildlife Service during petroleum storage tank repairs at the Midway Atoll fuel farm.

GeoEngineers will begin operations on Midway Atoll on May 1. By November 1, the Fish and Wildlife Service plans to have a long-term contract in place for operations at Midway. Availability of the long-term contract for bids will be announced through the *Commerce Business Daily*.